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AUTHOR Spiegel, Lisa A.
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ABSTRACT

A study examined the attitudes of English educators and professional business persons concerning non-standard English-language usage. Subjects, equal numbers of male and female members of the National Council of Teachers of English and members of the Chamber of Commerce, responded to a questionnaire containing 66 sentences, each containing an example of non-standard usage. Subjects used a numerical scale to indicate the degree to which each non-standard usage bothered them. Data were analyzed using a series of analyses of variance. Results indicated: (1) business persons displayed a less conservative attitude concerning usage than did educators; (2) there was no relationship between attitude usage score and age; and (3) males had a higher tolerance of usage deviations than did females. Findings suggest that it is unrealistic for educators to teach strict language usage exclusively because it is not used exclusively. (Seven tables of data are included; the questionnaire is attached.) (RS)

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Usage Revisited: A Comparison of Business Persons' and Educators' Responses to Choices in the English Language

Dr. Lisa A. Spiegel
The University of South Dakota
Division of Curriculum and Instruction
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069
605/677-5821

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Abstract

Many language arts educators find usage instruction confusing. Although standard usage is generally taught, nonstandard examples abound in student speech, print, and media. To some, standard usage is reserved for academia with nonstandard items being acceptable elsewhere. The question of whether standard usage is important and valued outside academia has surfaced among some educators. In response to this question, the study presented educators and business persons with nonstandard usage items and asked them to rate the items by determining their level of tolerance for each. These responses were then compared to determine current expectations and opinions of usage.

To English educators, it can seem that everyone is a critic--and is often critical--of the instruction found in today's classrooms. Opinions abound, with frequent consensus from the public being that English instruction is failing some students in the classroom. Because language arts skills, or the lack of them, are perhaps the most noticeable ones, language arts educators are often criticized highly over the quality of graduates leaving the public schools.

However, teaching language arts skills, and especially usage, to students is problematic. "Standard" usage generally refers to that usage promoted in grammar textbooks, but usage also refers to those word choices accepted and used by the majority of any community. Such usage may or may not be usual textbook English, and some educators find themselves in a situation in which textbook usage is that of the minority instead of the majority.

This poses a dilemma for English educators, for on the one hand, if they teach only standard usage, they find students memorizing standard usage rules for the classroom, but not actually using them in speech or writing. Examples of non-standard usage are abundant in the media and in many cases surround the students, making the case for such usage difficult to uphold in the classroom. English teachers may also worry that the time spent on refining relatively minor usage infractions could be better spent on developing a student's creativity and interest in writing through a more relaxed classroom atmosphere.

On the other hand, there is the intention to convey the idea that although there is no wrong usage, a certain usage may not be acceptable to a particular situation or audience. Those who advocate teaching standard usage feel students may mistake

this freedom for allowing them to speak and write however they choose without specific regard for their audience or situation. Moreover, there are those who feel teachers will do students a great disservice by not insisting upon the use of standard English, considering the importance such English plays in society. And of course we cannot ignore those who simply appreciate English and have a love for the language.

Many nonacademics are truly concerned with the use and teaching of standard English, and they can be vocal in their concerns. They claim that educators are doing a poor job, state that their prospective employees cannot complete a job application, and complain that their employees are unable to write well. Many feel that these problems were nonexistent in former years, when no-nonsense English teachers taught the solid basics and students did not leave the English classroom without being able to read and write well.

Although memories of former school days are usually exaggerated, the fact remains that many nonacademics care a great deal about standard usage. But the question is, do they care about all aspects of standard usage equally? Is non-standard usage sometimes acceptable, and if so, what type(s) of nonstandard usage may be used, and when?

These are interesting questions, and they have already been addressed. In 1981 Hairston polled nonacademics to determine their response to non-standard usage. This data indicated that respondents had strong conservative views regarding standard usage, with clarity and economy in writing to be most highly valued. Surface features of discourse mattered a great deal to these respondents.

I read Hairston's study with interest, identifying with the difficulty of teaching

usage to my own English students. I wondered if the business persons of today would be as concerned with usage as those in 1981, and I also wondered about another group--English teachers. How do they feel about standard usage, and what do they require of their students? I wanted to know if standard usage is as important in our classrooms and businesses as we think, and whether or not teachers are really preparing students for the business-oriented world outside of high school.

I decided to explore the opinions toward usage of both language arts instructors and professional business persons because I wanted to determine what aspects of usage are seen as important by both groups and which choices do or do not really matter, along with how much concern such choices actually cause. Perhaps most importantly, I wanted to determine the extent to which the priorities of people from academic and nonacademic areas agree with or differ from one another concerning the perception of usage and writing skills.

I wrote to Dr. Hairston, who graciously gave me permission to use her questionnaire in my own study. Her survey contained sixty-six sentences, with each sentence containing an example of non-standard usage. After each sentence these choices were listed: Does Not Bother Me; Bothers Me A Little; Bothers Me A Lot. At the end was an open-ended question: What is the most annonying feature of writing that comes across your desk? Although I used Hairston's questionnaire, I expanded the value choices to include 1) Would Definitely Bother Me, 2) Would Probably Bother Me, 3) May or May Not Bother Me, 4) Would Probably Not Bother Me, and 5) Would Not Bother Me, in order to better categorize responses. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire, explaining the study and asking specifically for respondents to

indicate how much each usage deviation actually bothered them, instead of reading each sentence solely to find the "error." It was also indicated that the questionnaire was not a test where their answers would be considered either right or wrong by an English teacher; instead they were to respond to items as they would normally if such a sentence would come across their own desk.

There were a few assumptions concerning the data. First, it was felt that business persons would display a more conservative attitude concerning usage than language arts educators. This idea was derived from the feeling that the general public--especially those in business--is quite critical of the English education found in public schools. Of course, language arts educators are also concerned with usage, but their daily dealings with students and the educational process may allow them to view usage differently than nonacademics.

It was next assumed that older respondents would display a more conservative attitude concerning usage than younger respondents; perhaps the general trend of conservatism among older adults would also apply to English usage. Also, many older adults were taught English through the emphasis of strict adherence to standardized language rules; such instruction would no doubt contribute to a more conservative definition of usage. Finally, it was thought that males and females would generally differ in their attitudes regarding usage due to their respective differences and perhaps differing perceptions and experiences with the public schools and the business world.

The questionnaires and instructions to both business persons and English teachers were mailed. Equal numbers of questionnaires to male and female business

persons and to male and female English educators were sent to determine if there was a difference in attitudes between the sexes. In order to receive a questionnaire, a business person had to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce; educators must be members of the National Council of Teachers of English. Random sampling with replacement was used to obtain potential respondent names.

Scores from the questionnaire were used as the dependent variable in a series of two-way analyses of variance. The independent variables were business persons, language arts educators, and sex. The .05 level of significance was used throughout the study as the minimum level of significance.

Scores from the questionnaire and hypothesis one and three were analyzed according to a preliminary 2 (male, female) x 2 (business, education) analysis of variance on the dependent variable, usage attitude score. Hypothesis two was tested by a Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

According to the analysis of variance which tested the significance of score by sex, results indicated that males had a higher mean than females (146.6 to 134.3, a 12.3 difference), yet the difference of mean scores was not found to be significant.

Insert Table 1 About Here

In the second analysis of variance, which tested the significance of score by group, results indicated that business persons has significantly higher means than educators (158.6 to 122.3, a 36.3 difference).

The third analysis of variance tested the significance of sex by group. Business

males had higher means than education males (167.5 to 149.7, a 17.8 difference), and education males had a higher mean than education females (124.4 to 120.5, a 3.9 difference). However, the difference in mean scores did not show to be significant.

Insert Table 2 and 3 About Here

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient, computed to determine any relationship between usage attitude score and age, was not significant at -.008.

Thus, hypothesis number one was rejected. Business persons displayed a less, not more, conservative attitude concerning usage than did educators. Hypothesis number two was also rejected, as it was determined there was no relationship between usage attitude score and age. Hypothesis number three can be accepted, for there is a difference between males and females regarding usage. Males have a higher tolerance of usage deviations than do females.

An SPSS-X subprogram was used to determine the mean and mode of the total sample response to each of the 66 items on the questionnaire. Value choice number one, "Would Definitely Bother Me" was selected a total of 54 times by the respondents, making it the response most frequently selected. Nine sentences were marked "Would Definitely Bother Me" by at least 100 persons. Sentence 21 (When Mitchell moved, he brung his secretary with him.) was the least popular, being marked by 132 persons. Sentence 35 (There has never been no one here like that woman.) was marked by 128 persons for second place. Third was sentence 34 (Him and Richards were the last ones hired.), marked by 126 persons, and fourth was sentence

65 (Jones don't think it is acceptable.), marked by 124 persons. Fifth was sentence 62 (When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs.) marked by a total of 123 persons.

Generally, the more glaring or noticeable the usage deviation, the more harshly it was ranked by respondents. Those sentences with a less noticeable deviation, or those displaying a commonly broken "rule," were rated much less harshly. For example, the two sentences with a ranking of one (Would Definitely Bother Me) with the lowest frequency were numbers 23 (When a person moves every year, one cannot expect them to develop civic pride) and 47 (The supervisor has no objections to us leaving). Number 23 is concerned with parallel structure, and 47 contains the word "us" instead of the traditionally used "our."

Insert Table 4 About Here

As there were 66 sentences on the survey form, the lowest numerical score possible was 66. A score lower than this figure would indicate some forms contained unanswered questions. Because value choices range from 1 (Would Definitely Bother Me) to 5 (Would Definitely Not Bother Me) lower scores indicate less tolerance toward usage deviations, with higher scores indicating a greater tolerance toward such deviations. The highest possible score would be 330, indicating that all items were marked by value choice number 5. Because the mean was 140.2 with the highest occurring score 278, this indicates that the respondents tended to view the usage deviations harshly.

Insert Table 5 About Here

While this may indicate a general lower tolerance for usage deviations among the respondents, it may also demonstrate that usage deviations are more pronounced when presented in single sentences out of context. It could also represent the fact that some wanted to "do well on the test," especially one given by an English instructor. As one respondent remarked, "If I found one of these sentences in the middle of a paper, I would not notice it nearly as much, and I would be much more lenient. However, faced with these individual sentences, I must rank them more harshly, for I certainly do not approve of these types of deviations."

The opinions of both business persons and educators regarding a certain document containing a usage deviation may be quite subjective. For some, a usage deviation in an otherwise well-written document is hardly noticeable; for others, it is an eyesore, spoiling the entire piece. The questionnaire's items were no doubt ranked with these viewpoints in mind; some probably were disturbed by the thought of a deviation at all, while others no doubt imagined the deviation in the context of a larger piece.

Only four sentences were most frequently given the value choice number two (Would Probably Bother Me) by respondents. Of those four, two were comma deviations with the others in the category of pronoun and diction. All four of the sentences are somewhat ambiguous; sentences 2 (Tact not anger is the best tactic in this case.) and 48 (Although the candidate is new to politics she has a good chance

of winning.) are perhaps not in blatant need of commas, and while sentences 16 (The situation is quite different than that of previous years.) and 7 (Everyone who attends will have to pay their own expenses.) represent usage deviations, they are commonly written and spoken ones.

Two questions were most frequently given the value choice three (May or May Not Bother Me) by respondents. Sentence 32 (Those are the employees that were honored.) dealt with agreement; sentence 1 (Extra copies will be provided for whoever needs them.) contained a pronoun question and was actually correct as written. Sentence number 32, while dealing with agreement, is also somewhat ambiguous and represents a commonly written and spoken deviation.

Only one question, number 11 (Almost everyone dislikes her; they say she is careless and insolent.) was rated most frequently by value choice number four (Would Probably Not Bother Me). Although this sentence contains the deviation of parallel structure, it is one that "sounds correct."

Five sentences were rated most frequently by value choice number five (Would Definitely Not Bother Me). These sentences included numbers 31 (The data supports her hypothesis.), 8 (Murphy is the person we chose to represent us.), 9 (Coventry is the most unique city in England.), 22 (Three causes of inflation are: easy credit, costly oil, and consumer demand.), and 25 (The worst situation is when the patient ignores warning symptoms.). Again, sentences 8 and 9 are ambiguous and "sound correct," sentence 22 represents a colon "rule" that many misuse, 25 is another ambiguous "correct" sounding sentence, and number 31 is based on the plural (but singular sounding) word "data."

Insert Table 6 About Here

Those sentences not receiving the value choice of one most frequently are those selections that are somewhat ambiguous or perhaps even tricky. Many represented forms that, while not standard usage, have nevertheless been more or less accepted in speaking and writing. It is the more blatant deviations (sentences 21 [When Mitchell moved, he brung his secretary with him.], 42 [Calhoun has went after every prize in the university.], both of which deal with nonstandard verbs; sentence 35 [There has never been no one here like that woman.], a double negative; sentence 34 [Him and Richards were the last ones hired.], which deals with nonstandard agreement; sentences 62 [When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs.] and 65 [Jones don't think it is acceptable.], both of which also deal with nonstandard agreement; sentence 58 [Senator javits comes from new york.], which has no capitalization) that are the most noticeable and therefore receive the harshest rating by respondents. Those deviations that have been generally accepted in speaking and writing tended to receive more favorable treatment by the respondents.

Overall, the mean scores for male business persons were the highest; next highest were female business persons, followed by male educators; female educators reported the lowest mean scores. Therefore, male business persons have the highest tolerance of usage deviations; female educators, the least.

When placed into groups, males reported higher means than females, and

business persons reported higher means than educators. Again, the higher the mean, the higher the tolerance for usage deviations.

It is not necessarily surprising that male business persons have the highest tolerance for usage deviations, for much of the material they work with has probably already been standardized--or at least proofread by someone--before crossing their desks. The sheer volume of employee-created material coming to them may also be lower than that of other survey respondents. If male business persons do not find themselves dealing with large amounts of nonstandard usage, they may well be more likely to rank the questionnaire sentences more leniently than the other respondents.

Female business persons had the next highest mean, and their level of tolerance was lower than their male counterparts. It is not necessarily surprising that this group has a lower tolerance; many of them are no doubt employed in positions where they must not only deal with large volumes of employee-generated work, but refine it as well. Secretaries, especially, were concerned with such perceived time-wasters as misspellings, fragments, and run-on sentences.

Male educators reported the third lowest means, with female educators showing the lowest means of the four groups. It is not surprising that educators have a lower tolerance for usage deviations; these are, after all, what many are teaching their students to avoid in the classroom. It stands to reason that if educators do not want to see such usage deviations on student papers, then they will not rate them highly on a survey questionnaire either.

It was speculated that perhaps business persons would be more critical of usage deviations because they would come in contact with them less. Such

infrequent exposure might tend to make this group more critical of the questionnaire items. On the other hand, it was also speculated that educators might rank the usage deviation items less severely; perhaps constant classroom exposure to them would make the questionnaire deviations appear less threatening. However, this was not the case; in all instances business persons' means were higher than those of educators.

It is also interesting to note that, as a group, male means were higher than those of female means. Again, male business persons probably receive less employee-generated material than their female counterparts; if they are in a position of power, no doubt material reaching them has been carefully proofread by its author. Male educators, while not in the same position as their counterparts, do sometimes employ a more structured atmosphere in the classroom regarding usage deviations; sometimes students write more carefully for a perceived strict male over a more approachable female. Of course, many male educators and business persons noted that they were more interested in overall content and readability, rather than making note of specific usage deviations.

Females had lower means. Again, many female business persons are responsible for vast amounts of employee-generated work; likewise, female educators also deal with student-generated work. In many businesses, there is the tendency that "the secretary will fix it," so the female business worker is not only likely to come in contact with many usage deviations, but she must find a solution for them as well.

The female educator is also sometimes seen as someone who "can fix it," and they are also more likely to come into contact with a greater number of usage deviations, thus bringing their level of tolerance down. Many female business persons

and educators remarked in the open-ended question that specifics, such as misspellings or wrong word choices, bothered them the most, not problems of content and organization as noted by the males. Because this survey questioned respondents on specific usage deviations, it perhaps follows that females would have a lower tolerance for those deviations.

It was somewhat surprising that there was found no correlation between age of the respondent and usage attitude score. Because the older respondents were no doubt taught to use severe, prescriptive usage rules, it was assumed that this group would rate usage deviations most harshly. While this was not shown statistically, many older respondents communicated that "usage is not being taught," or "people are forgetting their usage rules," or "schools should return to the basics." Many of the older respondents had very firm convictions regarding usage and a strong knowledge of it; many of their questionnaires were returned with sentences corrected, commented on, and diagrammed!

Insert Table 7 About Here

The teaching of usage is a large component of any language arts course; educators have shown that they take this component seriously. Language arts educators rate usage deviations more harshly than do business persons; female educators rate them with the least tolerance of all. Such standard usage is taught in classrooms, and educators do not tend to treat usage deviations by students leniently. The 66 usage deviations found on this survey were not treated leniently by educators

either.

Those sentences containing a deviation that was less noticeable or commonly assumed acceptable were rated less harshly by respondents. Business persons rated the survey's usage deviations with the most leniency of the groups. It appears that some usage forms deviating from standard usage are deemed acceptable by both business persons and educators; strict standard usage was not totally accepted or rejected by any group surveyed.

This study indicated that there needs to be a balance in the classroom while teaching usage. While standard usage is always acceptable, usage does not always have to be standard to be acceptable. Pooley (1974) defines good English as "That form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to the listener and speaker. . ." (p. 12). These results compare with Pooley's definition of usage.

Educators rate usage deviations harshly, yet they find some deviations acceptable. Business persons rate usage deviations less harshly, but they do find many forms unacceptable. It is perhaps unrealistic for educators to teach strict standard usage exclusively because it is not used--or needed to be used--exclusively.

Usage can and should be taught and used realistically. Educators cannot insist upon teaching their students only standard usage, for students will use other forms; business persons seem to be receptive to this idea. Instead, educators should teach standard usage as one option, not the only option, available for speaking and writing. Usage should be taught as being relevant to both the speaker's situation and the intended audience. Of course, standard usage is always appropriate, but students--

and others--should realize that other forms of usage can also be appropriate.

The open-ended question was put to thoughtful use by many; female educators especially enjoyed being able to give their opinions--and pet peeves--regarding usage. Indeed, many persons feel very strongly about usage, and they were eager to make their feelings known. Unfortunately, the overriding theme found in the final question was one of frustration--frustration on behalf of business persons that writing was poor after completion of school; frustration from educators saying that their teachings seem to have no effect upon their students. Nevertheless, whatever the outcome of this usage survey, or others like it, one thing remains clear: people are interested in, and have strong opinions about, usage.

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Table 1. Combined Observed Means for Sex, Group, and Sex by Group

Sex by Group		Male	Female	Group
Business	WGT.	167.47	149.65	158.6
Education	WGT.	124.41	120.50	122.29
		146.59	134.26	

Table 2. Cell Means and Standard Deviations for Male and Female Business Persons and Educators

	Mean	S. D.	N	95 Percent Confidence Level	
Male					
Business Persons	167.4	38.6	34	154.002	180.940
Educators	124.4	31.0	32	113.223	135.589
Female					
Business Persons	149.6	42.1	34	134.947	164.348
Educators	120.5	38.3	38	107.904	133.096
Total Sample	140.1	42.1	138	133.071	147.248

Table 3. Tests of Significance for Score Using Unique Sums of Squares

	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig. of F
Sex	4056.93	1	4056.93	2.83	.095
Group	44802.10	1	44802.10	31.28	.000
Sex by Group	1664.16	1	1664.16	1.16	.283
Within Cells	191915.45	134	1432.20		

Table 4. Mean and Mode of Total Sample Response to Questionnaire

Item	Value	Mode	Mean	S. D.	Sentence Deviation
1	3	40	2.97	1.24	Pronoun
2	2	40	2.40	1.17	Comma
3	1	105	1.39	.858	Run-on
4	1	76	1.91	1.27	Quotation Marks
5	1	45	2.42	1.31	Diction
6	1	45	2.67	1.53	Semicolon
7	2	33	2.89	1.45	Pronoun
8	5	51	3.74	1.23	Diction
9	5	51	3.62	1.43	Diction
10	1	64	1.92	1.10	Parallel Structure
11	4	39	3.47	1.32	Parallel Structure
12	1	50	2.35	1.34	Diction
13	1	64	2.02	1.22	Fragment
14	1	50	2.40	1.41	Dangling Modifier
15	1	82	1.76	1.17	Verb
16	2	35	3.02	1.26	Diction
17	1	85	1.85	1.34	Capitalization
18	1	65	1.94	1.11	Run-on
19	1	82	1.87	1.30	Apostrophe
20	1	55	2.04	1.13	Run-on
21	1	132	1.09	.521	Verb
22	5	44	3.46	1.37	Colon
23	1	43	2.50	1.40	Parallel Structure
24	1	52	2.14	1.23	Comma
25	5	38	3.35	1.33	Diction
26	1	73	1.91	1.22	Nom/Obj. Case
27	1	90	1.68	1.11	Fragment
28	1	79	1.70	1.00	Adverb
29	1	63	2.03	1.21	Period
30	1	91	1.44	.746	Comma

Table 4 (Continued)

Item	Value	Mode	Mean	S. D.	Sentence Deviation
31	5	58	3.79	1.32	Agreement
32	2	34	2.75	1.30	Agreement
33	1	47	2.24	1.26	Dangling Modifier
34	1	126	1.12	.492	Agreement
35	1	128	1.10	.458	Double Negative
36	1	54	2.29	1.36	Agreement
37	1	63	2.12	1.31	Quotation Marks
38	1	79	1.63	.939	Verb
39	1	51	2.42	1.45	Verb
40	1	96	1.52	.973	Diction
41	1	72	2.16	1.50	Apostrophe
42	1	116	1.23	.653	Verb
43	1	76	1.78	1.19	Parentheses
44	1	74	2.02	1.36	Fragment
45	1	45	2.27	1.22	Diction
46	1	97	1.42	.792	Double Negative
47	1	39	2.75	1.41	Pronoun
48	2	40	2.77	1.38	Comma
49	1	61	1.92	1.08	Comma
50	1	102	1.42	.874	Capitalization
51	1	46	2.59	1.43	Dangling Modifier
52	1	77	1.85	1.19	Agreement
53	1	76	1.78	1.09	Agreement
54	1	45	2.54	1.45	Agreement
55	1	81	1.88	1.29	Parallel Structure
56	1	67	2.29	1.55	Diction
57	1	45	2.54	1.45	Semicolon
58	1	116	1.34	.952	Capitalization
59	1	70	1.94	1.25	Agreement
60	1	52	2.27	1.29	Pronoun
61	1	81	1.70	1.06	Comma
62	1	123	1.19	.694	Agreement
63	1	83	1.88	1.35	Apostrophe
64	1	98	1.57	1.08	Fragment
65	1	124	1.18	.687	Diction
66	1	59	2.17	1.31	Semicolon

Table 5. Total Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents for Questionnaire

Mean	Standard Deviation	Total
140.16	43.11	138

Table 6. Percentage of Sample Response to Value Selection 1

Question Number	Response	Frequency	Percent
21	1	132	95.7
35	1	128	92.8
34	1	126	91.3
65	1	124	89.9
62	1	123	89.1
42	1	116	84.1
58	1	116	84.1
3	1	105	76.1
50	1	102	73.9
64	1	98	71.0
46	1	97	70.3
40	1	96	69.6
30	1	91	65.9
27	1	90	65.2
17	1	85	61.6
63	1	83	60.1
15	1	82	59.4
19	1	82	59.4
55	1	81	58.7
61	1	81	58.7
28	1	79	57.2
38	1	79	57.2
52	1	77	55.8
4	1	76	55.1
43	1	76	55.1
53	1	76	55.1
44	1	74	53.6
26	1	73	52.9
41	1	72	52.2
59	1	70	50.7

Table 6 (Continued)

Question Number	Response	Frequency	Percent
56	1	67	48.6
18	1	65	47.1
10	1	64	46.4
13	1	64	46.4
29	1	63	45.7
37	1	63	45.7
49	1	61	44.2
66	1	59	42.8
20	1	55	39.9
36	1	54	39.1
24	1	52	37.7
60	1	52	37.7
39	1	51	37.0
12	1	50	36.2
14	1	50	36.2
33	1	47	34.1
51	1	46	33.3
5	1	45	32.6
6	1	45	32.6
45	1	45	32.6
54	1	45	32.6
57	1	45	32.6
23	1	43	31.2
47	1	39	28.3

Table 7. Summary of Results for Questionnaire's Open-ended Question

Complaint	Business		Education		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Spelling	6	15	5	9	35
Word Choice	3	6	8	13	30
Fragment	2	1	4	10	17
Punctuation	4	5	3	5	17
Incoherence	4	3	4	4	15
Run-on	0	2	4	6	12
Agreement	0	0	3	8	11
Structure	3	1	2	2	8
Wordy	2	2	1	1	6
Carelessness	1	0	2	1	4
No Usage Rules	0	3	0	1	4
Error Amount	1	1	0	0	2
Total	26	39	36	60	191

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CONVENTIONS OF GRAMMAR

Please read each of the following sentences as you would read any other type of communication. Many of the sentences contain an item of usage, punctuation, or word choice that you may consider inappropriate for classroom and/or business use. Indicate the degree [(1) would definitely bother me, (2) would probably bother me, (3) may or may not bother me, (4) would probably not bother me, (5) would definitely not bother me] to which the sentence bothers you by circling the appropriate number next to each sentence. Please do not spend too much time with any one sentence or concentrate upon finding the "error" in each sentence.

1. Extra copies will be provided for whoever needs them. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Tact not anger is the best tactic in this case. 1 2 3 4 5

3. He concentrated on his job he never took vacations. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Wellington said, Trains will just cause the lower classes to move about needlessly. 1 2 3 4 5

5. The three men talked between themselves and decided not to fire the auditor. 1 2 3 4 5

6. Never reveal your weaknesses to others, they will exploit them. 1 2 3 4 5

7. Everyone who attends will have to pay their own expenses. 1 2 3 4 5

8. Murphy is the person we chose to represent us. 1 2 3 4 5

9. Coventry is the most unique city in England 1 2 3 4 5

10. People are always impressed by her smooth manner, elegant clothes, and being witty. 1 2 3 4 5

11.	Almost everyone dislikes her; they say she is careless and insolent.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	The state's hiring policies intimidate the applications of ambitious people.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	The small towns are dying. One of the problems being that young people are leaving.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	Having argued all morning, a decision was finally reached.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	If the regulating agency sets down on the job, everyone will suffer.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	The situation is quite different than that of previous years.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	A person who knows french and german will get along well in Switzerland.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	It is late in his term and inflation is worse and no one has a solution.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	Our companys record is exceptional.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	The President dismissed four cabinet members among them Joseph Califano.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	When Mitchell moved, he brung his secretary with him.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	Three causes of inflation are: easy credit, costly oil, and consumer pride.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	When a person moves every year, one cannot expect them to develop civic pride.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	We direct our advertising to the young prosperous and sports-minded reader.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	The worst situation is when the patient ignores warning symptoms.	1 2 3 4 5

26.	The army moved my husband and I to California last year.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	He went through a long battle. A fight against unscrupulous opponents.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	The lieutenant treated his men bad.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	Sanford inquired whether the loan was overdue?	1 2 3 4 5
30.	When the time came to pay the filing fee however the candidate withdrew.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	The data supports her hypothesis.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	Those are the employees that were honored.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	Visitors find it difficult to locate the plant, which affects business.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	Him and Richards were the last ones hired.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	There has never been no one here like that woman.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	These kind of errors would soon bankrupt a company.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	My favorite quotation is, "Take what you want and pay for it.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	The reporter paid attention to officers but ignores enlisted men.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	If I was in charge of that campaign, I would be worried about opinion polls.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	If Clemens had picked up that option, his family would of been rich.	1 2 3 4 5
41.	Its wonderful to have Graham back on the job.	1 2 3 4 5
42.	Calhoun has went after every prize in the university.	1 2 3 4 5

43.	Next year we expect to send a representative to China (if Peking allows it.	1 2 3 4 5
44.	Cheap labor and low costs. These are two benefits enjoyed by Taiwan-based firms.	1 2 3 4 5
45.	The difficult part is if the client refused to cooperate.	1 2 3 4 5
46.	State employees can't hardly expect a raise this year.	1 2 3 4 5
47.	The supervisor has no objections to us leaving.	1 2 3 4 5
48.	Although the candidate is new to politics she has a good chance of winning.	1 2 3 4 5
49.	A convicted felon no matter how good his record may not serve on a grand jury.	1 2 3 4 5
50.	I was last employed by texas instruments company.	1 2 3 4 5
51.	When leaving college, clothes suddenly become a major problem.	1 2 3 4 5
52.	Enclosed in his personnel file is his discharge papers and job references.	1 2 3 4 5
53.	The president or the vice-president are going to be at the opening ceremonies.	1 2 3 4 5
54.	To me, every person is an individual, and they should be treated with respect.	1 2 3 4 5
55.	Good policemen require three qualities: courage, tolerance, and dedicated.	1 2 3 4 5
56.	The interruption will not effect my work.	1 2 3 4 5

57. I have always hoped to work in that field, now I will have the opportunity. 1 2 3 4 5

58. Senator javits comes from new york. 1 2 3 4 5

59. I believe that everyone of them are guilty. 1 2 3 4 5

60. That is her across the street. 1 2 3 4 5

61. Cox cannot predict, that street crime will diminish. 1 2 3 4 5

62. When we was in the planning stages of the project, we underestimated costs. 1 2 3 4 5

63. The union claims it's rights have been violated. 1 2 3 4 5

64. The company is prepared to raise prices. In spite of administrative warnings. 1 2 3 4 5

65. Jones don't think it is acceptable. 1 2 3 4 5

66. Man is not the only user of tools, apes can also learn to manipulate them. 1 2 3 4 5

67. What is the most annoying feature of writing that comes across your desk?

68. NAME:

69. AGE:

70. MALE FEMALE (Circle one)